

When hurricane season starts this year, it will bring greater risk to many States, Maryland included. An April 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report found that global warming will result in more flooding through more intense hurricanes, reduced snow pack, and sea level rise. We are experiencing those changes today in Maryland.

We have over 4,000 miles of coastline, more than the State of California, and historic tide-gauge records show sea levels have risen one foot within Maryland's coastal waters over the last century. Due in part to naturally occurring regional land subsidence, Maryland is currently experiencing sea level rise at a rate nearly double the worldwide average. Thirteen chartered islands and large expanses of those critical tidal wetlands in the Chesapeake Bay have already disappeared.

These changes make us more vulnerable to storm surges. Allstate Insurance, one of our largest insurers, announced this past year that it would stop writing new homeowners' policies in coastal areas of my State. The reason they won't give insurance to homeowners in coastal areas is because they say a warmer Atlantic Ocean will lead to more and stronger hurricanes hitting the Northeast.

It is critical that we shore up the National Insurance Flood Program so that it is ready to support Marylanders and all Americans in times of need. S. 2284 does that without increasing incentives to build in disaster-prone areas or destroy environmentally sensitive areas. That is a tough line to navigate, but this bill does it well. I am proud to offer my support.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate enter into a period for morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

ENERGY SECURITY

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I recently returned from a trip around Wyoming. The focus of my trip was the need for change in our health care system. I have spoken about that issue on the floor of the Senate on a number of occasions, and while improving our Nation's health care system is essential, here today to speak on another issue of great importance to my constituents. That issue relates to our Nation's energy security. We have debated measures to tax one type of energy to provide tax incentives for other industries. We have debated, without success, the idea of opening up more of America to energy production and the Senate will eventually take up legislation related to climate change.

As we have had those debates, we have seen gas prices rise to record levels. We have passed a "renewable fuels mandate" that looks less encouraging with every new study that is released, and we have sent more and more money to countries that do not support our ideals of freedom and democracy.

Because of that, it is my intention here today to inject a little reality, a little common sense into the energy debate. I want us to take a realistic look at how we get there from here. The "there" is an America that produces more clean, renewable energy than we can possibly consume. The "here" and now is an America that is largely dependent on foreign governments for the energy we need, the energy we can't do without—the energy that is the lifeblood of our economy; the energy that makes our way of life possible. Where we find ourselves now is the hole that the failed planning of the past and realistic ideology has put us in. We have got to get out. We have got to get out for the sake of our children and for the sake of Americans who are struggling to pay their bills today.

For the most part, we can all agree on where we want to go. We want more clean energy. We want to import less foreign oil. We want improved energy efficiency. We can all agree that where we are is not acceptable. Its the road we travel, the pathway we take to a better future that we have been arguing about for decades. The arguments I have seen over the past dozen years or more center not on economic health of our Nation but on environmental health. OK. That is fine with me. We can talk about hydrogen fuel cells, solar panels and wind turbines and we should. All these energy sources and many other renewables are going to be a part of the solution, but overnight, they cannot replace the fuel sources we use today. The technology is not there. The infrastructure is not there, and the will of the American people to switch to different, more expensive fuel sources is not there. It is one thing to say, yes, let's go green, but it's another thing to pull the green out of your wallet to pay for it. Technology takes time to commercialize. Infrastructure takes time to build and the attitudes and willingness of many Americans to embrace a new energy market, a market that could be more expensive, will take time to occur.

What do we do until we get there? What do we do with the energy sources we have now? We make them better. We use them more efficiently. We make them clean. We make them green. And what is America's most readily accessible energy source that we already have the infrastructure in place to use? What is the 800-pound gorilla in the room that unfortunately so many of our political leaders are ignoring or worse yet, persecuting? It's coal.

When you turn on your computer, when you flick that light switch or turn on the television, it's probably powered by coal. Most of the energy we

use to recycle the aluminum cans you put in the special bin on the curb, the glass, the metal, the plastic, well it comes from coal. And if you had an electric car now and wanted to plug it in to recharge, that energy would likely come from coal. Coal supplies more than 50 percent of our Nation's electricity and we have enough of it to last us for more than 225 maybe 500 years. Coal is what is going to pave the way to a completely renewable energy future. But its not going to be the coal you are picturing in your head right now. It's not going to be the black lump that Santa gives to ill-behaved kids on his list. It's not the dirty, dusty coal of Dickens' Victorian London. No, what I am talking about is plentiful clean coal that we use our ingenuity and our resources to turn into green coal.

You are worried about climate change and support the use of clean-burning natural gas. Good. Then you should support the projects underway right now that will convert coal into that natural gas or carbon sequestration of 50 percent of the carbon from coal, which makes coal just as "clean" as natural gas. We are developing technology to efficiently and cost-effectively convert coal into low carbon, low sulfur diesel, and to convert coal into low carbon gasoline so we can cancel those trips to Saudi Arabia where we have our hands out begging them to increase production of oil. Look, tomorrow we are not going to be able to jump into our hover car that is powered by common household trash. We need to develop what we have right now alongside the fuels of the future. Instead of running from coal, we should invest in its abundance, in its power and its potential. Instead of running from coal, America needs to run on coal, green coal.

George Washington Carver is one of my heroes for what he did with the peanut. He found over 300 ways that American farmers could use the peanut, including as soap, facial cream, shampoo and even ink. What we need now is a George Washington Carver of coal—and I believe several are out there right now ready to invent. They just need a little bit more encouragement instead of the "can't do" attitude that I hear from some opponents of coal.

Over the next few months, as we debate energy issues in the Senate, I will be talking with my colleagues about the need to develop the energy sources we will use in the future, some of which must be cleaner, more efficient versions of the energy sources we use today. We need all the energy we can get to power America, and I look forward to working on that solution.

I have been paying attention to what China is doing. They have figured out that the future power of the world is in energy, and they are buying it up anywhere they can. They are even buying U.S. coal.